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ABSTRACT

Sociocultural theory has challenged existing notions of cognitive development by suggesting that psychological functioning is specific to its social context and is dependent on the mastery of culturally defined modes of speaking, thinking, and acting. This book provides a representative sample of work on the social and cultural foundations of developmental processes. Following an introduction on the integration of individual processes in accounts of children's learning and development, the book is organized into three parts. Chapters in the first part focus on the traditional educational setting, the classroom, and the ways that activity, discourse, and modes of thinking are organized there. In the second part, the chapters deal more specifically with the role that interpersonal relationships play in the teaching/learning process. Finally, the chapters in the last part address the broader issue of the relationship between the institutions of the educational system--such as schools or after-school programs--and the processes and outcomes of learning. Each part is followed by an integrative commentary chapter, which serves to highlight common issues across the individual chapters and, as each is written by scholars working within various theoretical frameworks, to provide a broad-based, multidisciplinary commentary. In a final general commentary, Jacqueline Goodnow places the issues raised in the volume as a whole in historical context and sketches an agenda for future work. (AA)

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